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SUBJECT: DJIBOUTI PRESIDENT CONCERNED OVER SOMALILAND

REF: 09 DJIBOUTI 1103; 09 DJIBOUTI 1089

CLASSIFIED BY: James Swan, Ambassador; REASON: 1.4(B), (D)

1.(C) Summary: Concerned over the deteriorating political situation in Somaliland and the risk of violence, Djiboutian President Guelleh has urged Somaliland President Riyale to accept a compromise with the opposition and has offered Djiboutian technical support to resolve the controversy over the voter registration list. End summary.

¶2. (C) In a September 12 meeting with the Ambassador (Ref A), President Ismail Omar Guelleh also raised the topic of his concern over current political developments in the self-declared independent Republic of Somaliland, whose western border is less than 20 kilometers from downtown Djibouti City. He said the Somaliland population is increasingly frustrated with its entire leadership - both government and opposition - and their inability to overcome the current political impasse. Echoing comments to us by his senior Somalia advisors earlier in the week (Ref B), Guelleh warned of the risk of increased violence if a political compromise were not quickly found.

¶3. (C) Guelleh said he had telephoned Somaliland President Kahin Riyale several days earlier to urge that, as President, he take the lead in forging a compromise. He said he told Riyale that it was unreasonable to argue that the voter registration list should be discarded. The list had been prepared over an extended period and at great expense. Rather than throwing out the results, Riyale should agree to various technical adjustments to improve the quality of the data and permit elections without lengthy further delay. Guelleh confirmed he had offered to send Djiboutian technical experts in voter registration to assist Somaliland in this effort.

¶4. (C) Comment: Djiboutian President Guelleh appears to be conveying the right messages to Somaliland President Riyale on the need for compromise.  
SWAN